

Lobbyist Mary Botkin to leave AFSCME



Union lobbyist Mary Botkin has announced she's leaving Oregon AFSCME Council 75 after representing the union in the state Capitol for the last 27 years.

Botkin, 66, has been on staff at the statewide public sector union since 1983. She served as an organizer on the 1985 campaign to unionize at what is today known as Oregon Health and Science University, and she's been a full-time lobbyist for the union since 1987.

Botkin is known as an expert on PERS, Oregon's Public Employee Retirement System, and has long been an advocate for the union's public safety

and corrections members. She was the subject of a Labor Press feature story in 2007.

On her own time, she's been active in the Democratic Party, and has been an Oregon delegate to every Democratic National Convention but one since 1988. She's currently active in the Ready for Hillary campaign to build support for a Clinton presidential run in 2016.

Botkin says she will leave the staff of Oregon AFSCME as of Dec. 31, 2014, and begin a practice as a contract lobbyist. She will represent Oregon AFSCME as a part-time contract lobbyist in the 2015 legislative session.

On the ballot in Washington

This year's Washington state ballot has less drama than usual: No high-stakes ballot measures or statewide candidate races to decide, and no close races for U.S. Congress.

But that doesn't mean labor will be sleeping through the vote. For the state labor federation — Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) — the priority is electing a pro-worker majority in the State Senate. After the 2012 election, Democrats Tim Sheldon and Rodney Tom handed control of the state senate to the Republicans. That resulted in gridlock, because the state house and governor's office are in Democratic hands. Very little legislation was passed in 2013 or 2014. Tom chose not to run for re-election, but WSLC would dearly like to unseat Sheldon in District 35, northwest of Olympia.

No state senate seats in Southwest Washington are considered close races, but WSLC and the Southwest Washington Central Labor Council have been actively backing **Monica Stonier** for re-election to the state house in the 17th legislative district. The district runs east of I-205 from Northeast Vancouver nearly to Battle Ground. Stonier is a former public school teacher who earned an 85 percent pro-labor voting record in her first two-year term. She's in a close race against challenger Clark County Republican Party chair Lynda Wilson, a Tea Party activist who wants to block local minimum wage increases and who testified in Olympia this year in favor of a sub-minimum wage. The Southwest Washington Central Labor Council has been phone-banking for Stonier up to twice a week at the Fire Fighters Local 452 union hall.

Also in Southwest Washington, WSLC is endorsing incumbent state representatives **Sharon Wylie** and **Jim Moeller** in the 49th legislative district (Vancouver).

The state federation, along with 16 other labor organizations, is also endorsing Democrat **Bob Dingethal's** challenge to incumbent Republican Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler in Southwest Washington's Third Congressional District. Dingethal, a former outreach director for U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell, got 41 percent of the vote in the August top-two primary;

Herrera Beutler got 47 percent, and a right-wing challenger got 12 percent.

On the statewide ballot, WSLC is recommending a "Yes" vote on **Initiative 1351**, which would direct the legislature to reduce class size — to less than 18 students per class in kindergarten through third grade, and less than 26 students in fourth through 12th grade. The measure would codify into state law a 2012 Washington Supreme Court decision, *McCleary v. State of Washington*, in which the court found the state wasn't meeting its constitutional obligation to fully fund basic education. Implementing the class size restrictions would make it necessary to hire about 15,000 new teachers. The measure doesn't say how the money should be raised, just that it would be

the state legislature's responsibility to appropriate the funds. Besides WSLC, the measure is backed by Washington State Building Trades Council, Machinists District Lodge 751, IBEW, SEIU, and the Washington Education Association.

For Washington Supreme Court, WSLC is endorsing Mary Yu (Position 1), Mary Fairhurst (Position 3), Charles Johnson (Position 4), and Debra Stephens (Position 9).

Southwest Washington Central Labor Council has also made endorsements in two local races. It's backing former state senator **Craig Pridemore** for Clark County Commissioner. And it's endorsing a proposed set of county charter changes [See article Page 3.]



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